



Food Stamp Voucher Processing Procedures

Offline Food Stamp Vouchers

There are two circumstances when a voucher may be used. The only exception to this is for non-traditional merchants (food delivery service, farmers' market, etc.) who do not have a Point of Sale (POS) terminal. These merchants will always use a voucher to complete a food stamp sale. If you sign a contract as a retailer who accepts food stamps and uses a POS terminal, your agreement says that you may use Offline Food Stamp Vouchers for food stamp eligible purchases when:

Circumstance **1**

➡ Use this procedure if:

All of the EBT POS terminals located in your store are not functioning and you are unable to process an EBT transaction. You must call the Retailer Assistance 800 number shown on the back of the EBT card for an approval. Before you call you should:

- Have your offline voucher in hand
- Complete all sections on the form including
 - ⇒ Card Number
 - ⇒ Transaction Date/Time
 - ⇒ Store FNS Number
 - ⇒ Amount of Purchase
 - ⇒ Cardholder Signature
 - ⇒ Approval Number Received

You may receive an authorization by utilizing the Audio Response Unit (ARU) or by speaking with a Retailer Assistance help desk customer service representative. If you can not get through on the Retailer Assistance 800 number at the time of the sale, you must call within 24 hours and obtain approval for the purchase amount. You will be provided an authorization number at the time of the call - provided that there are sufficient funds in the cardholder's account to cover the purchase. However, if an authorization number is not secured at the time of purchase, you may be liable for the amount of the sale.

IMPORTANT!

If an authorization is not received for the amount of the food stamp transaction at the time of the purchase, the merchant is liable for the amount of the sale and may not be reimbursed for the purchase.

☑Obtaining Approvals for Vouchers☑

You must follow these guidelines or you may not be paid for the voucher.

- Call the Retailer Assistance 800 number shown on the back of the EBT card. Get an approval for the amount of the purchase while your customer is with you.
- A HOLD will be placed on the amount of the purchase to the cardholder's EBT account when an approval is provided.
- Once your POS terminal(s) is working again, you can perform the Voucher Clear transaction.
- You will be paid for the transaction when you complete the Voucher Clear Transaction on your terminal. No settlement of funds will occur until the voucher is cleared.
- If for any reason you decide to void the voucher, you should call the Retailer Assistance 800 number and terminate the hold to release the cardholder's funds.
- The HOLD on the cardholder's EBT account will be released and the money returned to the cardholder if you do not clear the transaction on your terminal on or before 15 days from the date of transaction. The ONLY exception is for non-traditional retailers without POS terminals who must return the vouchers to the address listed on the voucher.

IMPORTANT!

Do not mail the vouchers to the EBT processor unless you are a retailer without a POS terminal. If vouchers are mailed they will not be processed.



Cautions



- The voucher must be unaltered; that is, the signature, card number, date, and amount of purchase may not be changed, or you run the risk of not receiving credit for the sale.
- If a mistake is made on the voucher form, destroy it and complete a new one. No altered vouchers will be accepted.



Keeping Voucher Records



- Keep a copy of the voucher to prove the sale. Vouchers must be kept 3 years from the date of transaction.
- If a cardholder questions the purchase, you may be required to produce a copy of the signed voucher.
- If you do not have a copy, your account may be debited for the purchase and the amount credited back to the cardholder's account.
- After you clear the voucher, staple the store receipt to the voucher for your records.

Circumstance **2**



Use this procedure if:

The EBT Contractor's host computer is not available to authorize transactions either through an online transaction at a POS terminal or provide an authorization number through the ARU. The EBT Contractor will activate the Emergency Voucher Procedure and provide such notification through the Retailer Assistance ARU or from a Retailer Assistance help desk Customer Service Representative.

When the EBT HOST System is not Working Use This Procedure:

Planned Outage - If the EBT Contractor is planning a system maintenance outage, you will be notified in writing prior to the outage of the correct procedures to follow. This notification will be in writing either directly from the EBT Contractor or through your Third Party Processor (if appropriate) or your Corporate Office Support Group.

Unplanned Outage - When the EBT system is not working, you will be notified of this fact either through a message on the Retailer Assistance 800 number ARU or from a Retailer Assistance help desk Customer Service Representative. You will be informed that the system is temporarily down and told the proper procedures to follow to utilize the \$40.00 Emergency Voucher Procedure and the corresponding authorization, approval and settlement procedures to follow.



Voucher Authorization Phone Numbers



Always check the back of the card for the correct number to call to receive a manual voucher approval number. This number appears above the magnetic stripe in the left corner of the card.

Arkansas merchants should call the following number for EBT manual voucher approvals:

1-800-831-5235